



Rich Man
Poor Man
By E. H. BURR

This is Chap-Book Number Sixty-four

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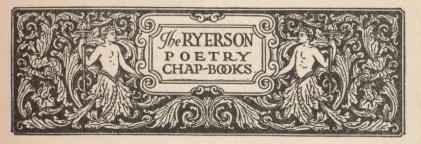
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Everett Harold Burr

FINELY TOUCHED to all fine issues, Everett Harold Burr, born in 1894 in the village of Bloomfield, Prince Edward County, to which his Loyalist ancestors had come a century before, was a rare combination of Galahad and Puck. To honour, cleanness and humour delicately whimsical, he added an understanding of Nature, observing accurately and minutely, seeing, hearing and learning, very fully, the things that Nature has to teach because of the poet heart and brain which he possessed. He was tender toward all living creatures, intolerant only of sham and cruelty.

Description of the Everett Burr, who died as the result of war service, in Christmas week, 1931, went overseas in October, 1916, and was gazetted second lieutenant in the East Lancashires in 1917. Severely wounded in Flanders, he was invalided to England, rejoining his battalion early in 1918. He was captured shortly after and was a prisoner till the Armistice. It is characteristic of him that no bitterness ever crept into the few and reticent references he made to his experiences at that time. This sheaf of poems, gathered as a tribute to his memory by some young men who were his friends, gives a glimpse of literary promise extinguished all too soon.

G. C. MARY WHITE.



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RICH MAN, POOR MAN

T HAVE brought you the royal velvet of night, And the rustling silk of full noonday; The shimmering spray of waterfalls I have brought To make a cloud about your shoulders; And the first-gathered pearls of morning To place about your throat. All the perfumed wild flowers I have heaped in your lap, With fern fans for coquetry; And brought the high hills To echo your laughter, And the shingly streams To make low, sweet music; Cloud fleece for slippers And the silver-clear pools To mirror your beauty.

Now I offer you love; Let me wrap you round with love That your heart may be warm And mine.

MATINEE

A LIGHT wind ran along the beechwood;
A little shiver quivered through the fern;
If we had only been there, you and I could
Have seen a very special magic turn,
When a thousand twisted notes
Shaken out to lily throats
In green-pointed petticoats
Danced the ballet of the trilliums in May.

How they fluttered in the forest-filtered sunlight
To the merry birds' ecstatic shy applause,
To the hushed things that scuttered from the grasses
To watch and clap delighted, furry paws!
For their dainty flower grace,
Chaste as snow and rare as lace,
Stirred the quiet woodland place
To a homage that is beauty's own reward.

"AND THE LITTLE HILLS LIKE LAMBS"

IN March, when evenings wear the flush of dawn And eager winds are posting north and south; When sullied snows, impatient to be gone, Dissolve in floods to mock a summer's drouth;

When sun and rain are partners in dispute And skies are higher than we ever knew, Where riven clouds, so swiftly involute, Disclose a heaven of intenser blue;

When willows show a lively-greening stem
And little furry paws are thrusting out;
(I run a careful finger over them—
Their innocence of claws I fairly doubt.)

Then, when the earliest bird upon the bough
His bright, perennial matins has begun,
I tune a jocund song with him as now,
Because the age-old conquest has been won.

SUNSET IN ALGONOUIN

THE day had held supreme content; I, pensive, watched the shadows slip From crag to crag; saw tall pines dip Their crests in ruddy element.

Away where hill and sky were blent, Those age-old lovers, lip to lip, Paid tribute to their comradeship And drank the fiery sacrament.

A loon rose, dripping crystal gold In the glare lake; a flight of geese Cut sharp triangles in the fold Of one low cloud of fulgent fleece,

All lapped with flames, still blazing high, Like some Norse king set sail to die.

JUNE FESTIVAL

+ + +

NOW June is cradled in a verdant field, Where morning-glories lift toward the sun Pale lucent goblets, only half concealed By woven grasses; here a web is spun Of gossamer, enfrosted with the blue Gemmed moisture of a still and starry night. A bobolink will sing his song for you; Repeat "the little phrase" for your delight, As if unmindful of the hidden nest, The eager brood of fledglings who await The day they, too, the plangent winds will breast To find their meed of song inviolate.

This path is beaten by the patient feet Of cattle, heedless of a cloud-flecked sky; With muzzles buried in the meadow sweet, No problems harass, such as you and I Have left behind to gather this short bliss, Set in a space between a morn and eve, While fragrant airs caress with one long kiss The flawless jewel of a day's reprieve.

LAST RITES

THE earth is drained of life
And lies under tired skies
Like a quiet old woman
With a grey sheet drawn
To cover her eyes;
The earth is an old, old woman,
Weary and wise.

The harvest is gathered now,
After a summer of toil,
For the quiet old woman,
Whose body is withered
And shrunken with moil,
Has paid for contentment and rest
In fruit of the soil.

The leaves are brushed with frost;
Scarlet and gold tarnish fast—
They will fall, like this flight
Of alighting starlings,
To bury the past;
And fold the tired, old, old woman
In peace at last.

THE CUCKOO'S NEST

AM the cuckoo
And my song
May haunt you
As you pass along
The dewy hedgerows
When the May
Is blossoming
At the close of day.

I am the cuckoo And I sing Of love and life Upon the wing; And times when far Afield I've flown Another's nest I make my own.

THE GALLEY

ABAR of sunlight through the murky pane Of office windows, dim with winter's grime, Lights up the agitated dust again And stirs a cosmic rhythm into rhyme. Those tiny motes that float in writhing sheen Are emanations of a mortal clay Now hung suspended for a space between Recurring life and ultimate decay. They settle on my desk and on the files That hold the records of men's gain or loss From shop and factory, shipping, forest aisles, And gild with living gold material dross. I have no part in all the strain and sweat To wrest a living from reluctant earth. How, from a maze of figures, can one get The thrill and shock that gave their commerce birth? While others venture I must count the gains, My desk a galley on a stagnant sea, And, though I am not bound, I feel the chains And hear the long lash hissing over me.

ENCHANTMENT

I WALKED one day when the sun was high Out where the grass is cool and sweet, And the weald, aquiver in the heat, Rolls up to meet the sky.

And as I strode the path along, Stole beside me a slender form; Her hand in mine was soft and warm, So there it must belong.

I dared not turn to scan her face Or search those eyes I knew so kind, Nor test the quality of mind Within the body's grace.

I only knew at last I'd found My mate for all the years to come; Her oft-dreamed beauty held me dumb, For I was spirit-bound.

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WAYFARING

A HEAD the road winds up and up, Behind the road winds down And I can see above the brow The chimneys of the town.

What cheer awaits me at the inn, The fare be coarse or fine? Go, landlord, air your softest bed And draw your choicest wine!

For I am on the road since dawn, The climb was steep and long; And since a beggar has my purse I'll pay you with a song.

This morning from the valley's depths I saw your highest spire; The finger-post was pointing to The town of heart's desire.

But still the road winds up and up; It's farther on, you say; Ah well, to-night I rest content, To-morrow, on my way.

THE YEAR ADVANCES

ACHILL strikes at the heart of summer— Still her outposts she defends; Bitter sweet the time of harvest, August ends.

Through forest ranks has passed the whisper: "Strike your tents, the time is come!" Scudding leaves provide the runners, Pass it on.

Plunging down to Pluto's regions, Now Persephone again Leaves behind a garnered bounty, Golden grain.

SONG AT SUNRISE

EVERY new morning that flames in the skies
Burns out the light of the last from my eyes;
Visions I've treasured as perfectly seen
Dazzled to phantoms that never had been.

In every petal that
falls from the rose
Something of splendour
is brought to a close;
In every leaf that slips
down from the tree
Turning to earth there is
something of me.

I would remember and
I would forget
Wisdom I've won and
the end is not yet;
Savour the zest of it:
only the "why"
Inscrutable, and the
rest, is to die.

A BAD BALLADE

DURING the half-forgotten strife
When nations mustered out their sons,
In France I led a soldier's life
And shared the traffic of the guns.
When those grey ranks, then called the Huns,
Advanced, I meant to win or die;
"A prisoner," the cable runs—
Adventure always passed me by!

Romance once beckoned me to take
A world-encircling ocean trip;
I thought my fortunes on the make,
And then I had to let it slip.
I missed my berth upon that ship;
(Too long a tale to tell you why)
Home ties have a tenacious grip—
Adventure always passed me by!

Adventure may her sails unfurl
On planes of high or low degree:
To-day a most attractive girl
Rushed up, in haste, to speak to me,
And I responded graciously—
(She thinks I'm someone else, thought I,)
"Oh, won't you buy a tag?" said she—
Adventure always passed me by!

ENVOY

I've always dreamed of high emprise And feats of derring-do to try; And that's the reason, I surmise, Adventure always passed me by.

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